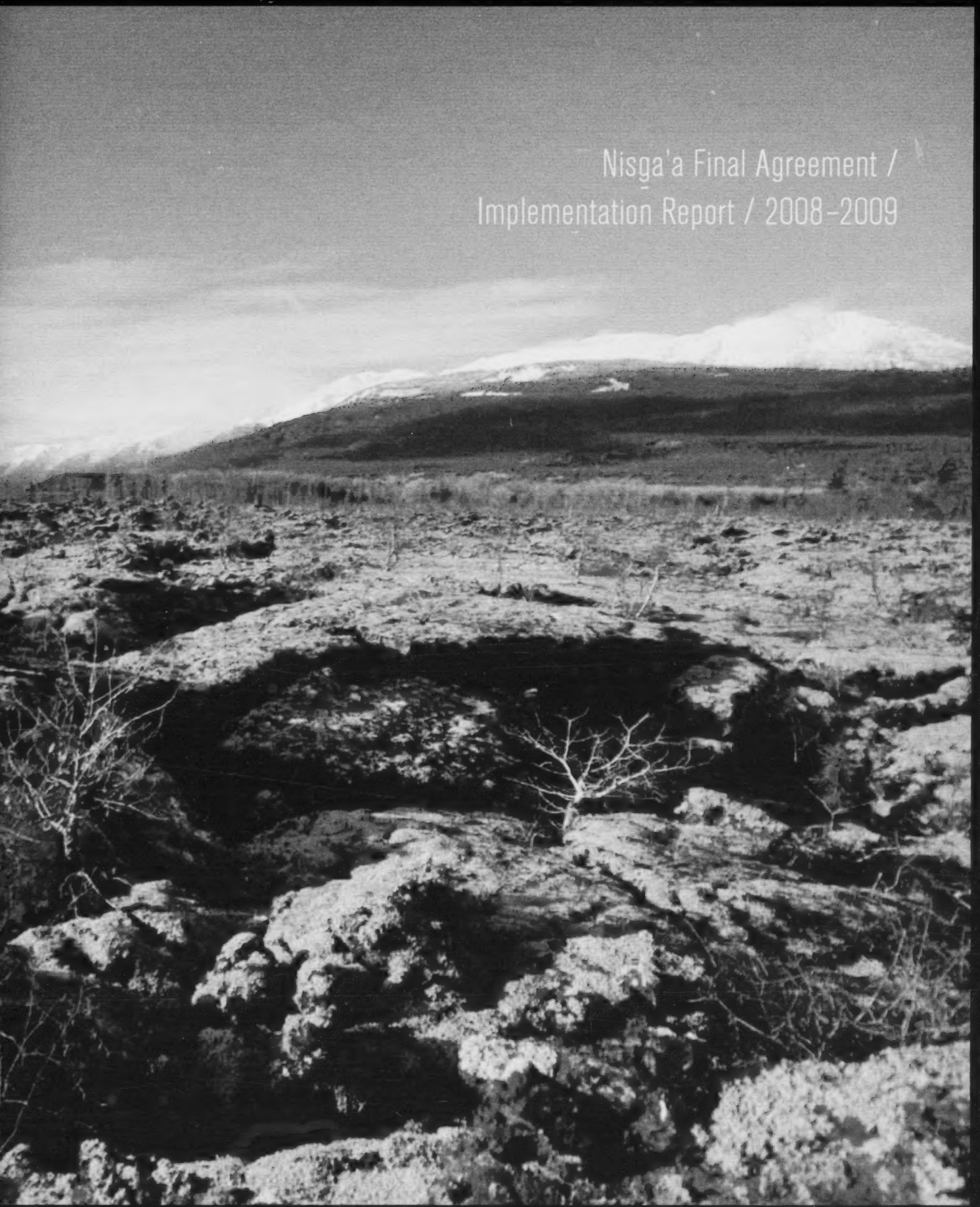
Nisga'a Final Agreement / Implementation Report / 2008-2009



The Nisga'a Final Agreement (the Treaty) is British Columbia's first modern treaty. A landmark in the relationship between Canada and its First Nations peoples, the Treaty came into effect on May 11, 2000.

The governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation are partners in the Nisga'a Final Agreement, which sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right of self-government. Because three governments share responsibility for the Treaty, an implementation committee was formed to provide a forum for the partners to discuss its implementation.

This report summarizes the progress made in the ninth year of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

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Hli gadihl Nisga'a ahl K̲'alii Aksim Lisims / Nisga'a – People of the Nass River

OUR HOME

K̲'alii Aksim Lisims (the Nass River) flows through a land of sacred mountains and dense forests on Canada's Pacific Coast. The Nisga'a people have lived in the Nass River Valley since before recorded time. Today, the Nisga'a Nation includes more than 6,400 people residing in the Nisga'a Villages of Gingolx, Laxgalts'ap, Gitwinksihlkw, New Aiyansh and outside of the Nass Valley in Terrace, Prince Rupert/Port Edward, Greater Vancouver, and across North America.

OUR TREATY

May 11, 2000, marked the end of a 113-year journey — and the first steps in a new direction. On that date, the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Final Agreement (the Treaty), the *Indian Act* ceased to apply to Nisga'a people (except for the purpose of determining whether an individual is an "Indian"). For the first time in modern history, the Nisga'a people had the legal authority to conduct their own affairs. The Treaty recognizes Nisga'a Lands (2000 km²) and opens the door for joint economic initiatives in the development of the Nisga'a Nation's natural resources. An example of hope, trust, and cooperation, the Nisga'a Final Agreement is being studied by governments and Aboriginal peoples the world over.

OUR GOVERNMENT

The Nisga'a Final Agreement provides certainty with respect to the Nisga'a people's self-determination. The Nisga'a Nation is represented by Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) — a modern, forward-thinking administration based on traditional culture and values. Nisga'a Government has the authority to pass laws on a broad range of matters. At the same time, Nisga'a lawmaking authority is concurrent with federal and provincial authority.

Proud British Columbians and Canadians, Nisga'a citizens are responsible for building and maintaining their own institutions. Designed to assure democracy, transparency, and accountability, Nisga'a Government is comprised of NLG and the four Nisga'a Village Governments. NLG's President, Chairperson, Secretary-Treasurer, and Chairperson of the Council of Elders are elected at large by Nisga'a citizens. The elected members of each Nisga'a Village Government are elected by the residents of each Nisga'a Village. Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a (WSN), the government's legislative assembly, enacts laws within the Nisga'a Nation's jurisdiction. These laws make up the Nisga'a Registry of Laws. WSN is also responsible for approving the operational budget of the Nisga'a Nation.

OUR VISION

"Sayt-K'ilim-Goot: one heart, one path, one nation." Sayt-K'ilim-Goot serves as a compass, providing clarity and direction. NLG is committed to ensuring its programs, services, and day-to-day operations reflect this vision.

In the spirit of Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, the Nisga'a Nation is a place where:

- our Ayuuk, language, and culture are the foundation of our identity
- learning is a way of life
- we strive for sustainable prosperity and self-reliance
- we inspire trust and understanding through effective communication, and
- our governance and services evolve to meet our people's needs.

"I'm a member of the Council of Elders. We talk about what's important to our nation, like our schools. We remind the people not to mistreat the animals or fish. We make sure the government is doing what it's supposed to do. We let them know we're watching."

— Emma Nyce, Eagle/Beaver tribe, Gitwinksihlkw

Ni'ilhl gan aluut'a on a naa ha'uum'wil dip hooxhl ayuugam', algaxam', ganhl lip wilaa loom' / Our Ayuuk, language, and culture are the foundation of our identity

Nisga'a Lisims Government is committed to protecting and promoting Nisga'a culture in all aspects of society. Ayuukhl Nisga'a — the ancient laws and customs of the Nisga'a people — informs, guides, and inspires Nisga'a culture.

The Nisga'a Constitution provides that the Simgigat (chiefs), Sigidim haanak (matriarchs), and respected Nisga'a elders advise Nisga'a Government on matters relating to the traditional values of the Nisga'a Nation through the Council of Elders, and that Nisga'a Government must respect and encourage the use of the Nisga'a language and the practice of Nisga'a culture. During the reporting period, at the request of the Council of Elders, NLG committed to exploring the feasibility of establishing a Nisga'a Language and Culture Committee.

"We must take great care of our own way of life — which is based on the Nisga'a Ayuuk — for we have a responsibility to ensure that it is passed on, as it should be, to our children who follow behind us."

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department

The Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department (AND) protects, preserves, and promotes Nisga'a language, culture, and history. The department works to ensure Nisga'a people are politically, economically, socially, and spiritually healthy, and empowered by a thorough understanding of Nisga'a culture. AND supports the cultural integrity of government programs and services by preserving the past and ensuring that Nisga'a knowledge and tradition inform government practices. This is achieved through:

- development and maintenance of the catalogue system for Nisga'a archives
- resource and administrative support for the Council of Elders and various government committees
- liaison and negotiations with the Royal BC Museum, Royal Ontario Museum, Smithsonian Institute, and
- research and production of books on key aspects of Nisga'a culture.

During the reporting period, AND continued to prepare for the return of Nisga'a artifacts, currently held at the Royal BC Museum in accordance with the Nisga'a Final Agreement. These and other artifacts will be displayed in the new Nisga'a Museum. AND's long-term goals:

- use the Nisga'a language as a working language of Nisga'a Government
- establish a Nisga'a National Archives open to Nisga'a citizens and the world
- protect and enhance all Nisga'a heritage sites
- safeguard Nisga'a Lands and resources with Nisga'a volunteers
- connect Nisga'a youth and elders through meaningful programs.

Nisga'a Museum

Together with the Nisga'a Foundation (a registered charitable society), NLG is building a Nisga'a Museum. When complete, the facility will house Nisga'a artifacts and be a permanent place for Nisga'a people and visitors to experience the rich life and legacy of Nisga'a culture. The return of Nisga'a artifacts is central to the museum exhibit and this story will be relayed to visitors through a thematic narrative "From Darkness to Light," which was completed and approved by NLG during the reporting period. Concurrent with the construction of the facility, exhibit designers continue building the story by creating exhibits showcasing the life and legacy of Nisga'a ancestors.

325 artifacts are returning home to the Nisga'a Nation.

Groundbreaking took place at Laxgalts'ap in July 2009, and the Nisga'a Museum is scheduled to open to the public in August 2010.

Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a (Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park)

Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park — the first provincial park managed jointly by a First Nation and British Columbia — offers interpretation of spectacular natural features and a dramatic introduction to Nisga'a culture. The Nisga'a alkali basalt flow is one of the youngest and most accessible volcanic features in the province. With a 16-site vehicle campground, picnic areas, visitor information centre, boat launches, and short hikes, the park offers visitors a wide variety of activities and a chance to learn more about Nisga'a culture and the natural history of the region. British Columbia funds an annual agreement for park services and maintenance ($45,000).

Alan Moore
Tribe: Wolf
Community: Laxgalts'ap

THE TREATY HAS HELPED strengthen and protect our culture. It's written right in the Treaty that the elders will continue to give guidance to Nisga'a Lisims Government when it comes to language, culture, and tradition. The elders keep telling the youth that they are our future leaders and they have to read the Treaty and understand it.

The way Nisga'a youth view their future prospects has changed drastically since I was a young person under the infamous *Indian Act*. Before the Treaty, you had people in Ottawa making decisions about our lives. Now that's changed — and it's really positive.

Our community has changed since the Treaty, especially when it comes to transportation. Before the Treaty, the roads were deplorable. Now transportation in the Nisga'a Nation has improved with paved highways, roads, and even the streets within the communities. This is good for economic development.

Has the Treaty given us more control over our lives? Yes and no. I say yes, because direct funding allows us to set our own priorities — not INAC, and I say no because NLG seems to be creating another bureaucracy.

Was it worth it? Would I encourage other First Nations to pursue treaties? Most certainly yes, but it hinges on how ready they are... You have to remember, it took 113 years for the Nisga'a Nation to achieve the Nisga'a Final Agreement. The settlement of the Land Question is really a beginning, not an end. That's when the work starts.

As Nisga'a Village Governments begin creating their own economic base, things will certainly improve as more employment is created from small business. In Laxgalts'ap, we have two new businesses under our forest company, a log home building program and a red cedar shake mill, which are both value-added ventures. We formed a partnership with a junior mining company in Vancouver to develop some of our construction aggregate. So we stepped out of the box, so to speak, and are using the Treaty to our advantage.

My hope is that the Nisga'a Nation will become self-reliant, especially when it comes to the development of our resources. That's where the funds will come from to finance our Village Government and Lisims Government into the future. As Nisga'a villages improve the business environment and attract outside investors, our communities will be well positioned to help build a vibrant Canadian economy.

In conclusion, I quote Prime Minister Stephen Harper. In November, 2007, he said, "the first priority is economic development. This is obviously the most essential step to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and their families."

"Was it worth it? Would I encourage other First Nations to pursue treaties? Most certainly yes, but it hinges on how ready they are..."

*The views expressed by individual Nisga'a citizens do not necessarily represent the views of the governments of Canada, British Columbia, or Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Huxwdii adigwil yukwhl siwilaaksim̓ / Learning is a way of life

The Nisga'a Nation is committed to improving its education system, helping adult learners gain more training, and encouraging all Nisga'a to engage in lifelong learning to help build the economy and strengthen Nisga'a society. On Nisga'a Lands, primary and secondary students are served by School District #92 (Nisga'a), part of British Columbia's publicly funded school system. The school board consists of four Nisga'a members (representing each Nisga'a Village) and one non-Nisga'a member. Nisga'a Lisims Government works in partnership with the School District to foster and protect Nisga'a language and culture while seeking to raise the standard of education for all Nass Valley youth.

Compared to the provincial average, Nisga'a youth represent a higher proportion of the population in their communities. NLG continues to plan for the current and future educational needs of Nisga'a youth, so that they will be fully prepared to participate in the economy. During the reporting period, the following activities were undertaken.

Facilities

- School District #92 (Nisga'a) became signatory to a "Climate Action Charter" designed to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. This agreement will entitle the district to grants for initiatives that will decrease use of fossil fuels. In addition, six triplex units were renovated with upgraded insulation, windows, doors, and siding.
- The Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School (NESS) gymnasium was re-roofed, the music room underwent flooring and electrical upgrades, and the shop underwent an automotive hoist upgrade.
- Attractive electronic signs were installed at each of the schools to enhance school-home-community communication.
- Laxgalts'ap Elementary School was renamed the Alvin A. McKay Elementary School after the first Superintendent of Schools.

Early Learning

- The Stepping Stones to Literacy project, funded primarily by the United Way, supported child and parent access to literacy resources.
- PALs (Parents as Literacy Supporters), Evening and Summer Reading Programs, Fine Arts Strategies, Buddy Reading, Literacy Blocks, Parent-School Interactivities, Laptop Literacy Strategies, Lexia (computer-based reading program), Balanced Literacy and Cognitively Guided Instruction were among the strategies employed to support student acquisition of basic skills.
- A special Early Learning Leadership grant of $30,000 was obtained from British Columbia to further the collaborative efforts of the school district and Village Government early learning programs.

Curriculum

- Culturally Responsive Math instructional strategies and resources were developed in partnership with UBC.
- English 12 First Peoples Literature was introduced.
- Nisga'a Language instruction and curriculum resource development continued.

Student Services

- School District #92 (Nisga'a) renewed its collaboration with Nisga'a Access to Justice, Child and Family Services, and Nisga'a Valley Health Authority in order to align resources in the best interests of children and youth.
- The school district and RCMP continued to work in partnership to provide educational programs regarding drug awareness and safety.
- An external review of special education services delivery was undertaken. As a result of recommendations, the district is strengthening relationships with Nisga'a service providers, including speech pathologists and occupational therapists.

Community Literacy

- School District #92 (Nisga'a) partnered with Nisga'a Village Governments to provide community access to school libraries. This initiative also supports student access to study space and tutors.
- Nationally recognized Aboriginal authors Diane Silvey and Drew Hayden Taylor presented to students and the public as part of an Aboriginal author celebration.

Community

- Raven House, a former student residence, was renovated and in-kind contributions were made to the Community Connections Project. Managed by a non-profit organization consisting of the four Nisga'a Village Governments, NLG, and School District #92 (Nisga'a), this initiative will see the creation of a facility to host, produce, and re-produce Nisga'a language and culture resources.

"I think the Treaty is having the biggest impact on the younger population. For these kids, it really impacts them because they live with it every day. I think they are proud of it... They say they not only have pride in being Nisga'a, but also pride in being Canadian. That is a definite change."

— Charity Peal, Eagle tribe, teacher, New Aiyansh

Post-Secondary enrollment and completion rates of Nisga'a citizens (who were eligible to graduate), 2008–2009

Educational Institution	Enrollment		Completion rate %	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
University	41	12	60.98%	41.67%
University College	3	9	66.67%	44.44%
College (public/private)	69	66	34.78%	51.52%
Open Learning Agency	2	0	50.00%	00.00%
Institutes	12	4	75.00%	100.00%
Private Post-Secondary Institutions	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
TOTAL	128	92	48.44%	52.17%

Post-Secondary Education

Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute (WWNI) offers Nisga'a-based post-secondary programs in Nisga'a communities and select urban centres. Serving both Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a students since 1993, WWNI partners with a number of public institutions for the delivery of programs, including:

- Bachelor of Arts, First Nations Studies-Nisga'a
- vocational and technical training
- Northern Advancement Program (university preparation)
- grade 12 achievement
- university/college preparation
- Masters Degree in Nisga'a Language and Culture
- Carpentry/Timber Framing, and
- continuing education programs.

477 Nisga'a students have graduated from a university, college, technical or trade school since May 11, 2000.

In addition, NLG funds Nisga'a students pursuing post-secondary education throughout British Columbia and North America.

During the reporting period, British Columbia provided $226,000 to Nisga'a Lisims Government under the Nisga'a Nation Fiscal Financing Agreement to support the delivery of post-secondary education and training programs at WWNI. In addition, British Columbia provided $91,000 to WWNI through a federation agreement between the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and WWNI.

"The more educated our people become, the more our Treaty will go forward. If other First Nations are wondering if it's worth pursuing a treaty, I say go for it! But get an education—that's the key."

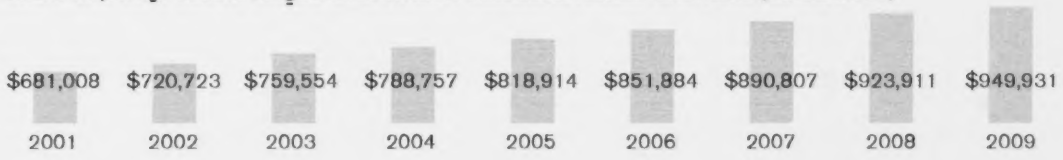
— Verna Williams, Raven/Frog tribe, Nisga'a Language teacher, New Aiyansh

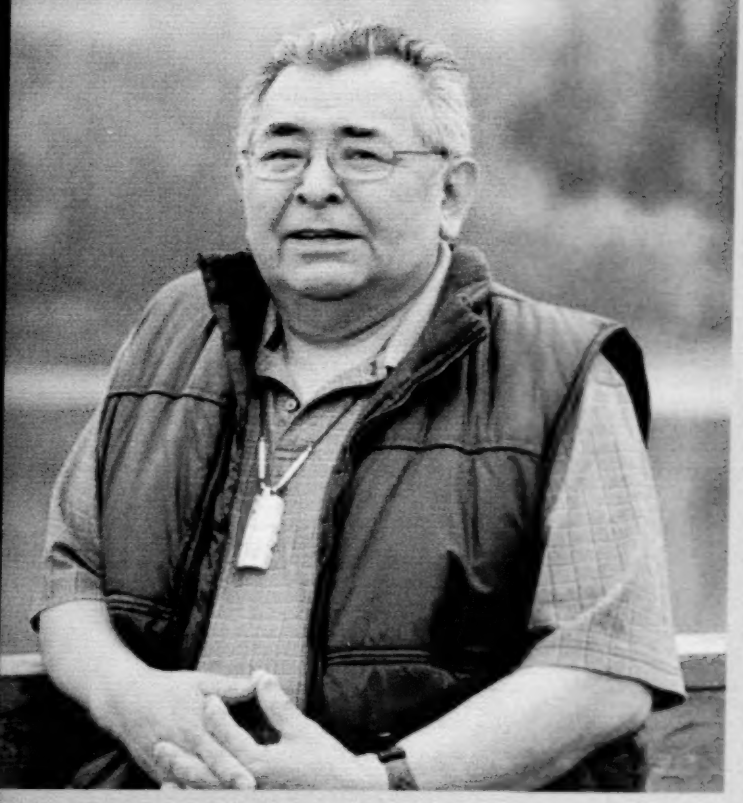
UNBC Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Endowment Foundation

The UNBC Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Endowment Foundation (a registered charitable society) was established in order to build a secure, independent funding base for WWNI's capital projects, student scholarships and bursaries, faculty and staff development, and other priorities.

From its inception, WWNI has received strong support from both the Nisga'a people and British Columbia. In a demonstration of community support, the Nisga'a business community initially contributed $100,000, and later made a $250,000 donation to the Nisga'a Endowment Fund (as it was then known). This was generously matched by British Columbia and UNBC. The endowment has continued to grow under the UNBC Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Endowment Foundation — largely through the generosity of donors who recognize WWNI's need for flexibility and increased financial independence.

UNBC Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Endowment Foundation. Annual fund value (on March 31)





Moses McKay
Tribe: Beaver
Community: Laxgalts'ap

I HAVE TWO BOYS, they're both grown with families now. After they graduated from high school, they said they wanted to go and see what's out there. I told them the same thing my father told me when I graduated. "You want to go out there? Go. But only you will know when to come back. And when you do, you will help the community." A lot of our people live in urban areas, and when they return it gives them an opportunity to bring back what they've learned out there.

I think a lot of people are coming back because of the Treaty. The community's grown quite a bit. Under the Treaty, I think they see a better future.

Compared to those of us who grew up under the Department of Indian Affairs, I think today's Nisga'a youth see their future in a different way. Now a lot of our young people have gone through the school system, and the Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute, and are now employed in the government or healthcare sectors. Everyone who has graduated from WWNI and attained their bachelors degree is employed. I've been a board member of WWNI for the past ten years and I'm really proud of that. I think it's because of the Treaty we are able to do this.

Other First Nations have learned from the Nisga'a experience. And I think the Nisga'a have always been leaders when it comes to the rights of First Nations people. Simply put, I guess the Nisga'a role is to be good Canadian citizens. After all, we're part of this country and it took us a long time to get recognized by the people in power. And if you'll notice, over the past ten years, the Nisga'a have welcomed everyone with open arms. We believe in living peacefully with one another.

What surprised me was the length of time it took to bring this Treaty home and the hardships our negotiators faced, like the opposition in Parliament. But now, those government people who were in opposition at the time are quite supportive. They realize how important it is for the rest of Canada to settle these long-term disputes over land. There were a lot of naysayers at home, too, but we all have to work together for the future of our people. The work starts once you have that Treaty signed, then you're in for a long haul.

At first, it seemed like we were just changing the name of the government we were under, but I don't think that's the case anymore. We're in control of our own lives. It's up to us to make that Treaty work.

There's room for a lot more improvement, including healthcare, housing, and economic development. I know it will take time. In regards to our forest workers and fisheries, they're doing a wonderful job. But like the elders used to say to us, "you're doing a good job, but you need to do more." I think that's the best advice I can give the government people.

"There were a lot of naysayers at home, too, but we all have to work together for the future of our people. The work starts once you have that Treaty signed, then you're in for a long haul."

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Sgihl gandi'akhla'amskw loom̓, gan̓ wil dip dixyugwihl ha'am wil / We strive for sustainable prosperity and self-reliance

The Nisga'a economy is a fully integrated part of the economy of northwest British Columbia — with all the opportunities and challenges that implies. The primary industries in the Nass Valley are fishing and forestry. Seasonal resource industries are complemented by full-time employment in the government, education, and healthcare sectors. Since May 11, 2000, infrastructure improvements have brought new jobs and skills to the Nass Valley while tourism and telecommunications offer the promise of expanding and diversifying employment opportunities. From small, local business ventures to international partnerships, Nisga'a Lisims Government actively supports and facilitates new initiatives to improve employment opportunities in the Nass Valley.

"Creating wealth – the capability and resources – guides our decision about the appropriate course of action. This will help us achieve the freedom to stand on our own."

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

Percentage of Population Receiving Employment Insurance Benefits

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Nisga'a	5.6	6.7	4.3	7.2	7.3	8.1	8.3	6.3	3.8	5.9	5.6
BC	2.9	2.8	2.2	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.4	1.2

*Assessment reflects beneficiaries as a percentage of the population age 19–64 for September of each year. Source: Human Resources & Social Development Canada Administrative Files and BCStats Population Estimate.

Forest Resources Department

NLG manages Nisga'a forests to protect this natural inheritance and to provide employment for Nisga'a people. Ecological sustainability is a prime consideration in the development and approval of all operations within Nisga'a Lands, and the *Nisga'a Forest Act* sets high standards to maintain biodiversity. NLG also manages all land and forest resources on Nisga'a Lands, including non-timber resources. Pine mushrooms, a popular delicacy in Asia, are a valuable resource found in Nisga'a forests and are harvested seasonally.

Although tough times continue for British Columbia's forest industry, two factors have allowed logging on Nisga'a Lands to continue: good cedar markets and the viability of saw log exports. The Annual Allowable Cut on Nisga'a Lands is 130,000 cubic metres. NLG collects a silviculture levy to ensure reforestation of cut-blocks is funded over the long term. The current fund is approximately $1 million.

Cubic Metres of Timber Harvested Since 2000

2000	99,566	
2001	74,469	
2002	59,557	
2003	41,646	
2004	21,352	
2005	83,100	
2006	72,100	$4,479,502*
2007	87,400	$5,583,262
2008	21,000	$2,233,743

*Dollar value of timber sales reported beginning in 2006.

Botanical Forest Products Harvested Since 2000 (mushrooms)

2000	13,620 kg	$400,000
2001	27,216 kg	$1,300,000
2002	23,000 kg	$1,000,000
2003	45,360 kg	$1,000,000
2004	12,000 kg	$150,000
2005	8,210 kg	$180,000
2006	1,556 kg	$45,716
2007	8,225 kg	$102,244
2008	11,656 kg	$43,382

"One of the things we've known all along is that the Treaty is not a book of guarantees—it's a book of opportunities. It means that opportunities are there, but nothing will be handed to us on a silver platter. We have to work for what we get. This is the real world. If anyone thinks it's one big handout, they need a reality check. They're dead wrong."

— Melvin Stevens, Wolf tribe, Manager, Laxgalts'ap Forest Corporation, Laxgalts'ap

Forestry Committee

The Nisga'a/British Columbia Forest Service Forestry Committee met twice during the reporting period. The meetings provided effective opportunities to share information and discuss strategies.

Forest Practices Board Audit

During the Reporting Period, an important milestone was reached in the devolution of authority to NLG. The final Forest Practices Board Audit of outstanding forestry obligations took place on Nisga'a Lands. Forest Practices Board auditors met with representatives of NLG to discuss audit plans and objectives, then auditors made an aerial survey of approximately 60 cut-blocks. The final audit report is expected in the coming fiscal year.

Forest Health

Beginning in 2008, ground observations indicated that the mountain pine beetle was spreading north of Terrace and onto Nisga'a Lands. NLG and British Columbia met to discuss a strategy for dealing with this challenge. An aerial survey provided hard data, including numbers and locations of "red attack" trees. With this information, a joint strategy was developed. Nisga'a Project funding was used for treatments within Nisga'a Lands and contracted to Lisims Forest Resources. Lisims Forest Resources was also successful in the competition for a pine beetle treatment contract, funded by British Columbia, outside of Nisga'a Lands near the north end of Kalum Lake.

In addition to the pine beetle outbreak, one cut-block was identified as having been affected by Dothistroma (needle blight) and was replanted.

Site Decontamination

During the reporting period, contracts were issued to New Aiyansh Village Government and Northwest Response Ltd. to remove debris from Ksedin Camp. Four soil decontamination cycles were completed. Following decontamination, a single contaminated sample was found. Final decontamination of the remaining area is planned for completion during the 2009–2010 reporting period.

Two refueling sites were also tested for contamination at the Ginlulak log dump. Following decontamination, retesting found remaining contamination on one of the sites, which will be treated again in 2009. After soil decontamination is completed, final site cleanup will be undertaken.

Secondary Provincial Roads

All eight secondary provincial roads were inspected and no maintenance issues requiring immediate attention were found. The Grease Trail (SPR 8672.01) was graded to provide access for a brushing crew.

Provincial Funding

In 2003, following the bankruptcy of one licensee, British Columbia assumed responsibility for completing unfulfilled treaty obligations. The work involved re-planting cut-blocks, maintaining roads and decommissioning two abandoned work sites. This work was called the "Nisga'a Project."

During the reporting period, British Columbia spent the following on forest management activities on Nisga'a Lands. All this work is part of the Nisga'a Project:

Project administration	$	1,233
Secondary provincial roads maintenance	$	28,694
Silviculture project layout	$	6,975
Planting[1]	$	132,597
Conifer release/brushing[2]	$	80,401
Burn landing piles[3]	$	4,595
Site clean-up (Ksedin Camp and Ginlulak log dump)	$	101,242
Forest Health (Mountain Pine Beetle & Dothistroma)	$	80,094
Total	$	535,831

[1] Portions of 10 cut-blocks planted (168 ha, 157,824 seedlings).
[2] Portions of seven cut-blocks brushed (114 ha).
[3] Landing piles on six cut-blocks burned. Nisga'a contactors were employed for most of this work.

"In the lead-up to the Treaty, I went to every meeting. I never missed one. Has it been worth it? I'd say yes. But... It will take a few years before they work it out. In the future, the promise of the Treaty will be fulfilled."

— Charles Alexander, Raven/Frog tribe, retired logger, Laxgalts'ap

Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program

One of the healthiest river systems in the world, K'alii Aksim Lisims (the Nass) is the spawning grounds of five species of wild salmon, steelhead, and oolichan. NLG and Canada manage the Nass River salmon fishery to preserve the resource, provide for Nisga'a citizens, and support a modern, sustainable fishing industry. NLG works with British Columbia to manage Nass winter and summer steelhead, various trout populations, and the various sport fisheries that occur on Nisga'a Lands. These initiatives are facilitated through the Joint Fisheries Management Committee (comprised of representatives from Canada, British Columbia, and NLG). Nisga'a Fisheries utilizes fish wheels and other technologies on the Nass River for salmon monitoring, tagging, and data collection, and conducts stock assessments on a variety of species throughout the Nass Area.

During the reporting period, the following activities were undertaken:

- 52 Individual Sales Permits were sold to Nisga'a citizens and 16 were issued to individuals over 60 years of age, free of charge, during 4 marine sockeye openings. Due to the expected low return of sockeye, there was no (in-river) Individual Sales fishery or Communal fishery.
- The Nass Joint Technical Committee (JTC) and the Joint Fisheries Management Committee (JFMC) each met twice to provide technical and management advice for NLG's steelhead stock assessment initiatives, recreational angling management, and angling guide management issues.
- NLG and British Columbia continued to address Angling Guide tenure issues not clearly addressed in either the Nisga'a Final Agreement or the *BC Wildlife Act*.
- A joint Nass steelhead scale analysis project was completed (at a cost of $2,900 contributed by British Columbia).
- NLG attended a United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union meeting in Prince Rupert to discuss the direction of the commercial marine fishery.

Salmon Harvested since 2000

	Species	Individual fish caught	Revenue to local economy
2000*	sockeye	54,734	$900,000
2001*	sockeye	37,833	$386,126
2002	sockeye	87,918	$833,781
	coho	2,425	
2003	sockeye	85,284	$984,708
	coho	10,317	
2004	sockeye	91,426	$1,141,930
	coho	10,294	
2005	sockeye	112,778	$665,556
	coho	14,762	
2006^	sockeye	62,422	$919,866
	coho	5,261	
	pink	2,912	
	chum	935	
	chinook	1,896	
2007^	sockeye	34,076	$616,051
	coho	6,354	
	pink	3,760	
	chum	719	
	chinook	2,440	
2008	sockeye	17,728	$206,126
	coho	793	
	pink	3,438	
	chum	296	
	chinook	0	

*In 2000 and 2001, only sockeye were harvested. ^Starting in 2006, all harvested salmon species are included.

6,654,114 dollars have entered the Nisga'a economy through the harvest of salmon since May 11, 2000.

"What we're doing here (at Nisga'a Fisheries) is important for all of us, especially with the Treaty. Everyone is watching us—like a million cameras watching every move we make... We've relied on wild salmon as a staple for centuries. It's important for the culture and community on many levels."

— Niva Percival, Wolf tribe, Nisga'a Fisheries technician, New Aiyansh

Lisims Fisheries Conservation Trust

The Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program applies the highest standards in the areas of conservation and environmental protection to ensure a healthy, productive aquatic ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations. This commitment is ensured, in part, by the Lisims Fisheries Conservation Trust. Trustees appointed by NLG and Canada administer the trust, and recommendations from the Joint Fisheries Management Committee are taken into account in sponsoring projects, programs, and activities that are in keeping with the trust's objectives. The trust promotes conservation and protection of Nass Area fish species, facilitates sustainable management, and supports Nisga'a participation in fishery stewardship for the benefit of all Canadians.

Investment Status of Lisims Trust 2000–2008

	Net asset value	Disbursement
Jun 22/00	$ 13,459, 847	$ 0
Dec 31/00	$ 13,726,993	$ 0
Dec 31/01	$ 13,722, 641	$ 0
Dec 31/02	$ 12,302,969	$ 0
Dec 31/03	$ 12,211,358	$ 0
Dec 31/04	$ 13,371,869	$ 313,000
Dec 31/05	$ 14,857,367	$ 600,000
Dec 31/06	$ 15,586,894	$ 600,000
Dec 31/07	$ 15,646,909	$ 550,000
Dec 31/08	$ 12,234,637	$ 0

Wildlife Management

Together with its Treaty partners, NLG provides advice about wildlife management and harvesting within the 16,101 km^2 Nass Wildlife Area. British Columbia uses this information to establish allowable harvests for designated species and approve the annual Nass Wildlife Management Plan. Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, moose, mountain goat, and grizzly bear have been identified as designated species for which there are specific Nisga'a allocations. NLG has implemented a permit system to manage the harvest of designated species by Nisga'a citizens. British Columbia, as per the Nisga'a Nation Fiscal Financing Agreement, provides $20,000 annually to NLG for wildlife management.

During the reporting period, the Gingolx-Laxgalts'ap connector grizzly bear mitigation strategy continued to monitor corridor impacts to bears, as well as educate the public about bear issues. This was year nine of a 10-year strategy in which British Columbia contributed $62,000. Conservative moose allocations for both Nisga'a citizens and provincially licensed hunters continue to be in effect over the Nass Wildlife Area as a result of the findings of a 2007 moose inventory. British Columbia continued to seek funding to conduct another moose survey to evaluate the performance of the conservation measures.

"We must take care of this Earth – all the animals, every stream in the Valley – and this land on which you and I live."

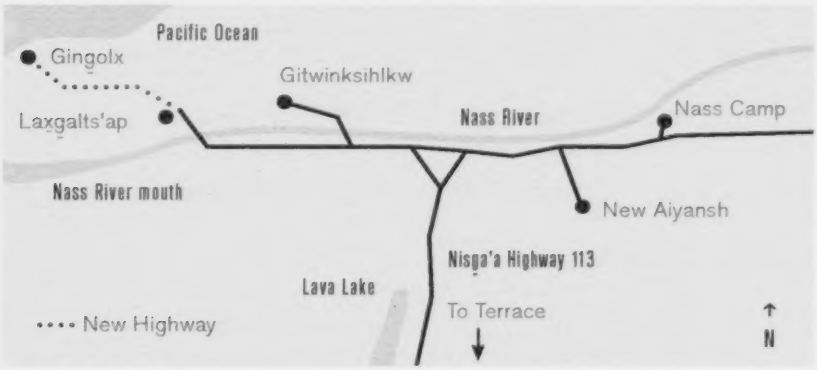
— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

Sustainable Resource Management Planning

NLG has been working with British Columbia on a Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP) for the southern portion of the Nass Watershed. The SRMP covers a large extent of the Nass Fisheries and Nass Wildlife Areas. When complete, the SRMP will establish resource management objectives for a variety of fish species, moose, mountain goat, grizzly bear, goshawk, wolverine, and fisher.

Infrastructure

Since 2000, British Columbia has invested $52 million to upgrade and pave Nisga'a Highway 113 from Lava Lake to New Aiyansh, Nass Camp, and Laxgalts'ap — connecting the Nisga'a Nation to North America's road network. In addition, Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation together invested $34 million to construct a new 29-km seal-coated highway from Laxgalts'ap to Gingolx, which was completed in 2005 and then paved in 2007. These investments in transportation infrastructure are improving the lives of Nisga'a people, bringing new visitors, and increasing access for the shipment of Nisga'a fish, seafood, and forest products. The workforce of these various construction projects was made up of approximately 40 percent Nisga'a citizens.



This map is not to scale and is for general information purposes only.

"I heard talk about them building the (Gingolx) road for 70 years, but now we finally have it. Now we get to see our neighbours in Greenville, New Aiyansh, Prince Rupert, and Terrace. A long time ago, it used to take me eight hours to go down to Rupert in my gill-netter. That was before the ferry. I think it's a heck of a big difference with this road in."

— Joshua Sidney Alexander, Raven tribe, retired fisherman, Gingolx

Northwest Transmission Line

In 2008, British Columbia announced it would restart environmental assessment and consultation with the Nisga'a Nation relating to the Northwest Transmission Line (NTL), a 335-km, 287 kV transmission line between Skeena Substation (near Terrace) and a new substation to be built near Bob Quinn Lake. During the reporting period, NLG incurred costs related to evaluating the potential impacts of the project, and may incur further costs over the course of 2009. On behalf of the British Columbia Transmission Corporation, BC Hydro offered capacity funding to NLG in relation to some of their expenses on this project.

Hydroelectric

Since 2004, Nisga'a Lisims Government has been investigating the feasibility of small "run of river" hydroelectric projects on Nisga'a Lands. Since then, NLG staff have assisted in completing stream data collection in support of feasibility studies.

During the reporting period, Nisga'a Lisims Government engaged the Dispute Resolution Chapter of the Nisga'a Treaty in response to the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office's (BCEAO) decision to amend a project certificate concerning a project that crosses the Nass Area, on the basis that British Columbia did not

comply with the requirements of Chapter 10 of the Nisga'a Treaty. By the end of the reporting period, NLG and British Columbia had settled the dispute in principle and were working out the final terms of the settlement.

Offshore Oil & Gas

British Columbia and NLG entered into a Protocol Respecting Offshore Oil and Gas in January 2005. The protocol committed the Parties to work together to provide information to Nisga'a Villages on the potential environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits, risks or opportunities arising from the exploration and development of offshore oil and gas; identify Nisga'a Nation interests and concerns; and explore how those interests and concerns can be addressed.

During the reporting period, British Columbia attended the 2008 Nisga'a Special Assembly to share information with Nisga'a community members on activities covered in the Protocol. In addition, British Columbia met with NLG's executive and staff from the directorates of Lands & Resources and Fisheries & Wildlife to discuss the Protocol.

Fiscal Financing Agreement

In accordance with the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation, Canada, and British Columbia entered into a Nisga'a Nation Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA) on May 11, 2000. The FFA was due to expire on March 31, 2006, but in accordance with its provisions it was automatically extended to March 31, 2008.

Through a series of presentations culminating on December 23, 2005, NLG provided Canada and British Columbia with its submission for the global funding it sought for agreed-upon public programs and services to be provided under a further fiscal financing agreement. In the 2006–2007 reporting period, and continuing into the next two reporting periods, tripartite work began to prepare a new draft fiscal financing agreement to replace the existing FFA. Throughout much of this reporting period, the Nisga'a Nation continued to be informed by federal representatives that Canada needed to secure a mandate to negotiate a further fiscal financing agreement. In the opinion of NLG, this delay has resulted in a financial cost to the Nisga'a Nation.

By March 31, 2009, Canada was in a position to provide a formal response to the Nisga'a Nation's December 2005 submission. At the end of the reporting period, the Parties began to make arrangements for Canada and British Columbia to provide their responses, and for the Parties to complete negotiations and conclude the further fiscal financing agreement.

At the end of the 2008–2009 reporting period, the FFA was in its third year of extension and the Parties agreed to extend the existing FFA for a fourth year (to March 31, 2010). However, the Parties also agreed that if the further fiscal financing agreement was signed before March 31, 2010, it would take effect no later than April 1, 2009. During the reporting period, Canada transferred $45,170,808 to the Nisga'a Nation under the existing FFA.

In addition to programs and services funding identified in the FFA, during the 2008–2009 reporting period Canada provided the Nisga'a Nation with targeted funding in the amount of $3,670,294. This was project-specific funding for human resources management, Community Economic Development Program, Indian Studies Support Program, facilitating communications, establishing wills for Nisga'a citizens and dealing with intestate estates, and various infrastructure projects in the Nisga'a Villages.

Individual Nisga'a Citizen Land Holding Project

There is a clear link between the way in which people hold title to their land and their ability to generate capital for economic development. Developing countries and their citizens are crippled by their inability to use the title to their lands as a means of raising capital. No longer bound by the *Indian Act*, this should not be the case for the Nisga'a Nation or its citizens. Yet Nisga'a citizens have been unable to benefit from the equity in their homes and Nisga'a Villages have been unable to capitalize on their assets. The Individual Nisga'a Citizen Land Holding Project aims to change this.

During the reporting period, NLG began developing new legislation that would provide individual Nisga'a landholders with ownership of fee simple estates registered in the Nisga'a land title system with unrestricted transferability. Unrestricted fee simple ownership would allow Nisga'a citizens, as property owners, to approach a lending institution for a mortgage without requiring a guarantee from the Nisga'a Nation.

NLG recognizes that an educational program will be necessary to assist Nisga'a citizens in making the transition to unrestricted fee simple ownership of residential land, and that Nisga'a Villages may need to create or update zoning bylaws to ensure that their jurisdiction for Village Lands can be exercised in a comprehensive way. Draft legislation is expected to be considered by Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a by the end of its fall session in 2009.

Land Title & Survey

During the reporting period, the Parties updated "metes and bounds" descriptions of Nisga'a Settlement Lands. This work was undertaken to clarify how Nisga'a Lands are described, based both on completed survey work and by way of proposed amendments to the Nisga'a Final Agreement, in an effort to ensure that anyone reading the Treaty would be able to identify the boundaries of Nisga'a Lands.

During the reporting period, several survey plans of portions of the Nisga'a Highway were prepared and are being reviewed by the Surveyor General of British Columbia and NLG. Additional portions of the Nisga'a Highway will be surveyed in the future.

Nisga'a Commercial Group of Companies

To ensure the separation between commercial interests and government programs and services, the Nisga'a Nation created Nisga'a corporations to fulfill specific needs, such as marketing fish, managing forest resources, building a telecommunications infrastructure, and promoting tourism. These businesses are managed through the Nisga'a Commercial Group of Companies (NCG), with a mission to improve and sustain the economic wealth and well-being of the Nisga'a Nation and its citizens by being well managed, profitable, and having a reputation for excellence.

The Nisga'a Commercial Group of Companies is wholly owned by the Nisga'a Nation, but professionally managed by an independent Board of Directors made up of leading members of the business community who provide a wealth of experience and candid advice:

- Mike Harcourt, Chair
- Chris McNeil, Vice-chair
- Jean LaRose, Secretary-treasurer
- Dr. Milton Wong
- Dr. Joseph Gosnell
- Dr. Brent Mainprize, and
- Brenda Baptiste.

During the reporting period, an operational review was undertaken of NCG to refocus operations to better respond to the regional and global economic downturn, and to identify opportunities for future business investment. The result has been a leaner, more focused group of companies that remain independent of government decision-making but better aligned with the spirit of NLG's mission: one heart, one path, one nation.

NCG maintains Nisga'a Office Solutions in Terrace to serve as business gateway to the Nass Area for future business development.

Nisga'a Fisheries Ltd. (NFL)

The Canadian Fish Company and NFL pay Nisga'a fishers for their harvest, market their fish, operate three landing sites on the Nass River, and are responsible for grading, counting, and weighing salmon for payment. They also distribute flaked ice to Nisga'a fishers and oversee the transportation of all salmon to a central depot located at the Nisga'a Fresh Fish Plant in New Aiyansh. Due to projected low returns, only one marine opening of the salmon fishery took place during the reporting period and there was minimal commercial harvesting of salmon under the Treaty.

Lisims Forest Resources

Lisims Forest Resources manages the marketing and sale of Nisga'a forest resources and is working to expand and diversify the market for Nisga'a forest products. In addition to domestic clients, Lisims Forest Resources sells Nisga'a wood to China, Japan, and Korea, and is actively seeking partners to develop value-added wood products for domestic and international customers. Lisims Forest Resources is also seeking partners to expand harvest of over a dozen other marketable botanical forest products, including lobster mushrooms, King boletus mushrooms, fiddleheads, and wild medicinal herbs. During the reporting period, the downturn in the forest sector, compounded with high energy costs, continued to result in minimal operations.

Telecommunications (enTel)

After the Effective Date of the Treaty, NLG committed to bringing high-speed Internet access to the Nass Valley to support the economic and social development of the Nisga'a Nation. To meet this challenge, NLG created enTel Communications Inc., which continues to bring broadband Internet access to the Nass Valley and beyond.

NCG Tourism

NCG Tourism has been working to develop three tours that directly and positively reflect Nisga'a culture and the sustainable uses of Nisga'a Lands. Working with representatives of the four Nisga'a Villages, the goal of NCG Tourism is to create employment and open the Nass Valley to visitors from around the world while highlighting a culture rich in history. These activities will create between 25 and 35 seasonal jobs.

During the reporting period, NCG made a major investment in marketing and advertising Nisga'a Tourism. Ads aired on radio and TV, both regionally and provincially. These and other marketing initiatives focused on promoting and increasing awareness of Nisga'a Lava Bed Park and related tours.

"The Treaty gives me hope in the future. Now that we have our land and our future in our own hands, the potential for the nation is limitless. This is true for the tourism industry as well. If we reach our full potential, then the revenue generated will be phenomenal. And we will be able to share with people from all over the world and let them know who we are."

— Chris Nelson, Eagle tribe, tourism marketing student, Prince Rupert

Stephen Azak
Tribe: Killer Whale
Community: Gitwinksilkhw

I WAS PART OF the Nisga'a negotiating team for the Treaty. Currently, I'm a board member of WWNI. I'm 64 years old.

At the government level, I think things have changed a lot since the Treaty. Things are a lot easier than they were with INAC. Back in those days, it was difficult for people in Nisga'a Villages to communicate with representatives of federal, provincial, and local governments. Now, it's much easier. Under the Treaty, NLG holds public meetings in each community and general assemblies are held every two years. The people can speak directly to their elected officials in a public forum.

I see a lot of changes, like the development of the new community centre, for example, plus the development of WWNI and its affiliation with UNBC and other universities. This gives our students access without having to leave home. The healthcare system seems to be doing quite well. It's the same thing with School District #92 (Nisga'a). The line of communication with the provincial government is a lot better than it was before the Treaty. Relations between the Nisga'a Nation and the other levels of government have also improved. I traveled with members of the provincial government to Japan and Rio de Janeiro. They asked us to speak on how Nisga'a people are treated by the government and about our Treaty. I let them know that I believe treaty-making is the only way forward. Litigation and roadblocks aren't going to do it.

I'm really proud of this Treaty. All the Nisga'a chiefs put their hearts into one common bowl and went ahead with it. I was really happy. And yes, I think the Treaty is working. People are starting to have more control over their lives and some of our people are starting to take big roles in provincial government. Harry Nyce, a member of our community, is now the president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). We have members on the UNBC board, and one of our people is now president of Northwest Community College. Gradually, we're moving outside of our Nass Valley communities. So I think we're going to play a big role, not only in B.C., but in Canada.

One of my hopes for the future is that we stay on the same path, and not stray off that road our grandfathers built for us. That's something that has kept our people together. I dream of our kids not leaving home anymore, and the beginning of an economy here in the valley where we're not so dependent on things like natural resources. Maybe attracting some computer-related jobs. There are a lot of good computer people up here.

"...public meetings are held in each community and general assemblies are held every two years. The people can speak directly to their politicians in a public forum."

*The views expressed by individual Nisga'a citizens do not necessarily represent the views of the governments of Canada, British Columbia, or Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Simutkws nuum̓, ii sgihl axy̓ookskw loom̓, wil adigwil nidixdidak̲dim̓ / We inspire trust and understanding through effective communication

The Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Directorate of Nisga'a Lisims Government works to improve the way government members communicate with each other, Nisga'a citizens, its Treaty partners, and the wider world.

Public Consultation

NLG is committed to keeping open channels of communication with Nisga'a citizens, British Columbians, and Canadians. This report is part of that effort. Showcasing Nisga'a Government's accountability to its own citizens, Special Assemblies are held every two years, where Nisga'a Government reports on all areas of governance and public programs. Every Nisga'a citizen has the right to attend and speak at a Special Assembly and the proceedings are webcast to ensure all Nisga'a citizens are able to participate.

2,400 people have attended NLG special assemblies since May 11, 2000.

Knowledge Network

During the reporting period, NLG established the Nisga'a Nation Knowledge Network. A series of websites, the network provides citizens with news, information, calendars, and resources from across the Nisga'a Nation. Content is contributed by NLG, Nisga'a Villages, Urban Locals, and other relevant organizations. The network also provides the tools to support online working environments, and work is currently underway to extend these services to include online meeting capabilities.

The Nisga'a Nation Knowledge Network also provides communication solutions to specific needs within NLG. Examples include a website which enables the Lands and Resources Directorate to share mapping files with other organizations, and a project management site for the construction of the Nisga'a Museum that provides access to tender documents. In addition to conserving resources, these initiatives have saved thousands of dollars in duplication costs while improving access to information.

NLG's Affiliation with the Land Claims Agreements Coalition

NLG is a member of the Land Claims Agreements Coalition, which represents all Aboriginal groups in Canada that have completed modern treaties. The Coalition's primary purpose has been to ensure that comprehensive land claims and associated self-government agreements are respected, honoured, and fully implemented in order to achieve their objectives. Through its participation in the Coalition, NLG has shared its experiences, and frustrations, in working with Canada and British Columbia to implement the Nisga'a Final Agreement.

During the reporting period, the Land Claims Agreements Coalition completed its model policy on Canadian treaty implementation, which it released publicly on March 3, 2009. The Nisga'a Nation fully endorses the Coalition's model policy as an important step in encouraging Canadian governments to implement modern treaties fully, according to their spirit, intent, and the fundamental objectives they embody.

Dimt hugaxam diyeem t an de'entgum / Our governance and services evolve to meet our people's needs

Guided by Nisga'a culture, and best practices from around the world, Nisga'a Lisims Government works to improve the lives of Nisga'a people. In partnership with the four Nisga'a Village Governments, NLG delivers a wide range of culturally appropriate programs and services in the areas of health, education, social development, local services, and access to justice.

"It is our responsibility to ensure quality, healthy living in our midst. This is achieved by helping each other and showing kindness to each other."

— Ayuukhl Nisga'a

Nisga'a Valley Health Authority

Nisga'a Government manages the delivery of healthcare in Nisga'a communities through the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA). Registered under the *Societies Act*, the elected body includes representatives from the four Nisga'a Villages and an elected representative from the non-Nisga'a community. Responsible for creating and maintaining facilities and promoting medical and public healthcare programs, NVHA operates a diagnostic centre in New Aiyansh and satellite clinics in the other Nisga'a Villages, providing physician services, home care, cultural community health representatives, and the administration of non-insured health benefits. NVHA is one of the most progressive, efficient, and effective First Nations healthcare organizations in Canada.

- The NVHA medical team is comprised of six physicians, including a head physician, and rotates every six weeks; at least three physicians are in the Nass Valley at all times.
- Nursing Services include four community health nurses, one home care nurse, one public health nurse, and one treatment nurse.
- Mental Health Services are delivered by two psychologists, one mental health manager/ family therapist, four community wellness counsellors, and four youth enrichment workers.
- Community health representatives (6) provide prevention/intervention programs. Community health representatives promote Nisga'a culture and medicines in healthcare programs.
- Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) are provided through the NIHB manager, four patient travel clerks, and one claims assessor.
- Dental Care in the Nass Valley is coordinated by the dental manager, receptionist, dental assistant, and ten alternating dentists from Vancouver.
- Home Care services are managed by the home care nurse manager, who oversees one home care leader and seven home support workers in the four Nisga'a Villages.

During the reporting period, NVHA began preparations to launch both laboratory and X-ray services in the Nass Valley.

"Since the Treaty, we're able to make better decisions regarding healthcare. Before, the federal government told us what to do. Now, we can make our own decisions about what we need. Overall, the Treaty has been good for our people, but there is still a lot that needs to change."

— Doris Tait, Raven tribe, retired Community Health Representative, Council of Elders member, New Aiyansh

Nisga'a Child & Family Services

With funding from British Columbia and Canada, NLG provides service options to ensure the protection and well-being of Nisga'a children consistent with both the Ayuukhl Nisga'a and British Columbia statutes and policies. This is achieved through Nisga'a Child and Family Services (NCFS), which works to support Nisga'a families through the promotion and utilization of the Ayuuk. NCFS offices are located in New Aiyansh, Terrace, and Prince Rupert.

NCFS provides both statutory services (an extension of the child welfare law) and non-statutory services (volunteer community services). NCFS provides support services for families, which promote sound parenting practices and respite care. Voluntary care agreements allow parents to place their children in a safe, approved home during medical treatment or training. Special Needs Agreements ensure the safe care of children with special needs. NCFS approves and provides support payments to adults to provide foster care for Nisga'a children in Nisga'a family care homes. Additional services include:

- Family Group Conference Program, which provides a venue for alternative family dispute resolution
- Infant Development Program, which supports children from 0-3 years of age by providing support and education for parents, and
- Supported Child Care Development Program, which identifies, supports, and provides advocacy for children with special needs.

NCFS also provides resources for the following programs:

- Youth Worker Program
- Drug Awareness Resistance Education
- Community Workshops
- Psychological Services
- Speech Therapy
- Family Support Services, and
- Recreation Program.

Social Development Services

NLG is committed to supporting healthy and economically prosperous Nisga'a communities where children, youth, and adults have hope and opportunities, and access to social programs that support a healthy living standard. This is accomplished by developing individual and family strengths and by providing access to social services that will enhance their self-sufficiency. As social policies are continuously evolving, NLG keeps apprised of any provincial changes and ensures NLG's policies and services are reasonably comparable to those available to residents elsewhere in British Columbia. The following programs are funded through the FFA:

- Basic Needs
- Training Employment Support
- Special Needs
- Family Violence Prevention
- Guardian Financial Assistance
- Community Support Services
- Adult In-Home Care
- National Child Benefit Reinvestment
- Employment Initiatives, and
- Community Preventative Services.

During the reporting period, NLG reviewed options to streamline and modernize the disability insurance application procedure for Nisga'a citizens, so as to ensure better, more equitable access to this program. In addition, NLG is currently reviewing its own policies and has initiated professional development training to enhance skills and build capacity among Nisga'a social development workers.

Access to Justice

NLG's Access to Justice Department works to involve every Nisga'a citizen in promoting safety by building on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities. The Justice Department supports the prevention and resolution of conflicts by increasing awareness of the Nisga'a Ayuuk and Canadian laws through the following programs.

The Aboriginal Justice Program receives $74,718 annually from British Columbia to assist the Justice System in improving its relevance and effectiveness with Nisga'a communities; encourage the revival and empower Nisga'a traditional practices in resolving conflict; develop alternative programming to deal with deterrence and prevention, diversion, sentencing, rehabilitation, and incarceration; and encourage crime prevention through information, education, and community development programming with Nisga'a communities. The Yuuhlimk'askw Program and the Youth Justice Program are funded by Canada and receive $87,890 annually to provide culturally appropriate alternative justice solutions and to help Nisga'a communities effectively respond to youth justice issues/needs. The Nass Valley Victim Services Program is funded by British Columbia and receives $35,000 annually to provide emotional support to victims of crime during their recovery and involvement with the justice process.

During the reporting period, the Access to Justice Department:

- Coordinated the Nisga'a Interagency Group meetings (involving all Nass Valley front line services) to discuss and address common concerns regarding alcohol & drug abuse, youth issues, and suicide prevention.
- Collaborated with School District #92 (Nisga'a) in utilizing Nisga'a restorative approaches to deal with conflict situations in the school.
- Increased outreach/advocate services to Nass Valley residents in the criminal justice system to ensure that they have accurate information and access to appropriate social, education, and other resources, and to help them address the underlying issues that may have contributed to the charges.
- Opened a satellite Justice office in Laxgalts'ap to offer easier access to justice resources for the communities of Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx.
- Provided more training opportunities for Nisga'a citizens to understand family law processes, restorative justice processes, elder abuse, and youth justice (in partnership with Justice Education Society of British Columbia).
- Coordinated a cross-cultural awareness workshop for court personnel that was well attended by Crown Counsel, probation officers, RCMP, Native Court workers, and court clerks (in partnership with Corrections Branch).
- Advised NLG in signing a Community Tripartite Agreement, which outlines how the RCMP delivers policing services to the Nisga'a Nation and provides consultation to ensure the terms of the agreement are met to the satisfaction of the Nisga'a Nation. The agreement also provides NLG the opportunity to identify desirable attributes for RCMP members considering a placement in the Lisims Nass Valley RCMP Detachment.

Nisga'a Registry of Laws

The Nisga'a Registry of laws is housed in NLG's offices and may be accessed by the public. Updated on a regular basis, the Registry consists of 167 enactments, which are now available on NLG websites at: www.nisgaalisims.ca and www.nnkn.ca. During the reporting period, WSN amended and/or reenacted the following legislation:

Nisga'a Fees and Administrative Charges Regulation Amendment No. 1, 2008
Nisga'a Goods and Services Tax Act
Nisga'a Elections Act
Nisga'a Elections Act In Force Regulation
Nisga'a Elections Regulation
Nisga'a Elections Dispute Resolution Regulation
Nisga'a Goods and Services Tax Act In Force Regulation
Nisga'a Business Development Fund In Force Regulation
Nisga'a Business Development Fund Regulation
Nisga'a Financial Administration Act Amendment Act No. 1
Nisga'a Citizenship Act In Force Regulation
Nisga'a Citizenship Regulation
Nisga'a Financial Administration Amendment Act No. 2
Nisga'a Personnel Administration Amendment Act No. 1

*All Nisga'a legislation amended since the time of its original enactment by WSN was consolidated. These unofficial consolidations are updated regularly, as new amendments are made.

Nisga'a Consumer Taxation

Taxation and the provision of programs and services for citizens are characteristic and related features of governments. That is, governments levy taxes within their lands and utilize the tax revenues they raise to enhance the quality of life for their citizens.

In accordance with the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the relief from consumption taxes — in the form of remission orders — expired, on June 1, 2008, for all persons within Nisga'a Lands and for Nisga'a citizens anywhere in Canada. During the reporting period, a tripartite technical working group considered whether the Nisga'a Nation might benefit from levying its own tax on consumption attributable to citizens and other persons within Nisga'a Lands.

On July 30, 2008, the Nisga'a Nation and Canada signed a tax administration agreement for a Nisga'a Nation goods and services tax. The Agreement resulted in a law being enacted by NLG to impose a tax, like the federal goods and services tax, within Nisga'a Lands. On that day, NLG also enacted the *Nisga'a Goods and Services Tax Act* within Nisga'a Lands and the tax came into immediate effect. The federal GST no longer applies where Nisga'a GST applies.

In addition, the Nisga'a Nation and British Columbia concluded a Social Services Tax Sharing Revenue Agreement, which took effect on June 1, 2008. Together, these tax arrangements resulted in $425,893 in revenue to the Nisga'a Nation during the reporting period.

Tanya Stanley
Tribe: Wolf
Community: Gingolx

I WORK AS A patient travel clerk for Nisga'a Valley Health Authority, providing assistance for patients traveling to medical facilities outside the Nisga'a Nation. I was a teenager when the Agreement-in-Principle was signed. The Treaty is still brand new, taking baby steps in relative terms. What I mean by that is I expect the Treaty to be around when my great, great grandchildren are Nisga'a leaders.

When I travel to Prince George or Vancouver, and people find out that I'm Nisga'a, the initial reaction I get is: Wow! When they ask what I think about the Treaty, I tell them I'm in support of it. We have been given the opportunity to have more control. Have we taken full advantage of that opportunity? I don't think we have yet. We have to be the ones to carry the torch into the future. I think that if we can own the Treaty, accept it, and believe in it, then we can prosper as a nation.

I have a son. I see my future, and that of my family, in a positive light because I feel I was taught that you have to work for what you want in life. You can't just sit and wait for something to come to you, you have to go out and get it. It comes down to individual responsibility.

My hopes and dreams for the Nisga'a Nation is that our leaders take a more proactive approach. A change I'd like to see is not in regards to the Treaty itself but in the people living under the Treaty. I don't know if you know this about our First Nations people, but a lot of us have this overall mindset of oppression. I think once our Nisga'a people can overcome this mentality, and begin to take responsibility for ourselves — and feel empowered as a nation, community, family, and individuals — then we will have what we need to prosper. The Treaty has offered us the opportunity to overcome that mindset. And I think our nation can move forward and feel good about the Treaty.

It really does come down to every single Nisga'a citizen having a role to play. I think our leadership needs to understand that. We have some good positive, feedback for them. We have ideas. Once we can seize those ideas and opportunities we will be fine. We will prosper.

"...you have to work for what you want in life. You can't just sit and wait for something to come to you, you have to go out and get it."

*The views expressed by individual Nisga'a citizens do not necessarily represent the views of the governments of Canada, British Columbia, or Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Nisga'a Settlement Trust

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the capital transfer to the Nisga'a Nation is paid over 14 years. NLG has developed a risk budgeting framework for these funds, known as the Nisga'a Settlement Trust.

Where other elected administrations routinely plan four to five years into the future, the primary goal of the Nisga'a Settlement Trust is to provide financial stability to the Nisga'a Nation through the seventh generation. One of the challenges is balancing the preservation of capital with earning a sufficient return to accomplish this goal. It is imperative that the funds in trust maintain their value and be invested in a manner that earns a rate of return greater than inflation. NLG has engaged a firm of actuaries to assist in the development of investment guidelines and policy to achieve these goals.

Annual Nisga'a Settlement Trust fund value (on March 31)

2003	$27,028,368
2004	$36,903,676
2005	$44,858,894
2006	$55,504,793
2007	$71,875,085
2008	$82,520,867
2009	$78,990,071

350,000,000 — projected dollar value of the fund in 2040. As long as it remains well managed, it is estimated that income from the trust will help sustain future government funding.

"In order to succeed in life, we have to be united as one nation. We need to learn the ways of our elders and carry on our traditions... A lot of our culture is about respecting our elders. We're all in a circle and we need to keep our circle together, our youth and our elders. It is our way of life and it's the best way for us to succeed."

— Rosetta Doolan, Killer Whale tribe, teacher's assistant, Gingolx

Youth in Government

NLG is committed to improving access for Nisga'a youth to programs and services by involving them in the social and economic decision-making of government. This is accomplished through the Nisga'a Youth Advisory Council (NYAC). Each Nisga'a Village and each Nisga'a Urban Local has its own Nisga'a Youth Council, which sends a representative to the seven-member NYAC.

During the reporting period, NLG and the NYAC recognized the need for an open and consistent dialogue between Nisga'a Youth Councils, Nisga'a Village Governments, and Nisga'a Urban Locals. In order to enable and facilitate that dialogue, the NYAC became recognized as a standing committee of the Programs and Services Committee of Nisga'a Lisims Government.

NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT – TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

A pillar in the foundation of good governance is a government's ability to maintain transparency and accountability in its day-to-day operation. The *Constitution of the Nisga'a Nation* (Nisga'a Constitution) came into effect on May 11, 2000, and provides for the establishment of Nisga'a Lisims Government, each of the four Nisga'a Village Governments, and the three Nisga'a Urban Locals. The Nisga'a Constitution further called for the establishment of Nisga'a Laws, which, among other things, contain provisions for transparency and accountability in government decision-making and financial administration.

One of 167 laws enacted since the Effective Date, the *Nisga'a Government Act* stipulates requirements for the frequency of meetings of various bodies, such as Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a (WSN), the NLG Executive, the Council of Elders, and all other House committees of Nisga'a Government. The *Nisga'a Government Act* also enforces the Members' Code of Conduct, which specifies requirements with respect to the conduct of each elected and appointed Nisga'a representative while serving in their official capacity.

The Nisga'a Government's standards of financial administration are comparable to standards generally accepted for governments in Canada. There are requirements in Nisga'a Laws for budgets, quarterly reports, annual reports, and audits of the financial activities of Nisga'a Government and Nisga'a Public Institutions. The *Nisga'a Financial Administration Act* stipulates details for oversight, management and control of all financial matters of the Nisga'a Nation, Nisga'a Government, and Nisga'a Public Institutions. Under the *Nisga'a Financial Administration Act* there must be an annual independent audit of financial statements of Nisga'a Government and Nisga'a Public Institutions which is made available for inspection by Nisga'a citizens and is available on Nisga'a Lisims Government websites: www.nisgaalisims.ca and www.nnkn.ca.

The Nisga'a Nation is also accountable to the governments of Canada and British Columbia for the funding provided by those governments and fulfils this obligation by submitting reports and audits, annually or as required.

NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT — SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

All amounts are in the March 31, 2009, audited financial statements or have been calculated from those statements. These statements are available to all Nisga'a citizens by appointment. This summary has been audited.

FINANCIAL ASSETS	2009	2008
Cash and other current assets	$28,993,499	$30,690,369
Nisga'a Financial Agreement proceeds receivable	96,764,618	113,315,093
Designated cash	21,352,938	25,388,940
Designated trust funds	95,062,156	78,311,099
Other assets	2,066,032	2,171,582
	244,239,243	249,827,083
LIABILITIES		
Bank indebtedness and other current liabilities	19,850,168	18,004,597
Capital Finance Commission deferred revenue and other grants	24,195,112	28,284,016
Nisga'a Final Agreement debt payable	44,197,214	51,745,387
Other liabilities	1,436,116	19,097
	89,678,610	98,053,097
Net financial assets	154,560,633	151,773,986
Non-financial assets	13,701,545	10,716,432
Accumulated surplus	168,262,178	162,490,418

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

REVENUE		
Fiscal Financing Agreement and related funding	$42,213,489	$40,059,111
Other revenues	19,996,945	18,373,704
Total	62,210,434	58,432,815
Transfers and operating grants		
Nisga'a Village Governments	14,888,670	20,920,625
Nisga'a Valley Health Authority	12,351,696	10,923,460
Nisga'a School Board #92	6,908,927	7,455,733
Nisga'a Urban Locals	1,363,308	1,250,132
Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a	417,475	470,612
Transfer of tangible capital assets to villages	-	3,971,782
Total	35,939,076	44,992,344
Expenses	20,508,598	16,586,215
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	5,771,760	(3,145,744)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	162,490,418	165,636,162
Accumulated surplus, end of year	168,262,178	162,490,418

These two maps are representational and not to scale and are for general information purposes only.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement (the Treaty) is British Columbia's first modern treaty. A landmark in the relationship between Canada and its First Nations peoples, the Treaty came into effect on May 11, 2000.

The governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation are partners in the Nisga'a Final Agreement, which sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right of self-government. Because three governments share responsibility for the Treaty, an implementation committee was formed to provide a forum for the partners to discuss its implementation. This report summarizes the progress made in the ninth year of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

"Simply put, the Treaty allows us to make our own decisions and to take responsibility for our own lives. We enjoy our successes and learn from our mistakes. Now we have control over our land, forests, and fishery, and can develop them responsibly for the long term. The question of ownership of the land is settled once and for all... The Treaty offers an ongoing challenge — and we are rising to meet that challenge."

— Nelson Leeson, Sim'oogit Axhlawaals, Hereditary Chief of the Raven / Frog Clan, second President of the Nisga'a Nation, land claims negotiator, public servant, commercial fisherman, avid basketball player, husband, father, friend.

In memoriam, December 12, 1948 – November 26, 2009